

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office
FLOOR DEBATE

March 13, 2003 LB 197

estimate of how those dollars...what has been the annual expenditure of those dollars? In other words, what are the needs of Nebraskans? Do we have an annual figure on that?

SENATOR VRTISKA: Well, the Labor Department has that. I don't have that in front of me right now. I can certainly get that for you and provide it for you as soon as I'm able to talk to somebody from the Labor Department.

SENATOR JENSEN: Well, and I guess my question is the President did extend benefits another 13 weeks. Is that correct?

SENATOR VRTISKA: That's right.

SENATOR JENSEN: And what does that do to a fund like this by extending those figures? I mean it depends, certainly I would imagine, on the unemployment numbers that we have here in Nebraska, but do we have any estimation also on how much that is going to increase the need for these funds? I guess I'm just trying to look at the overall fiscal numbers that we have here in the state. Are they enough? Certainly we here in the state have, I think, some real concern or I have a real concern about the viability of our economy and of the workers in this state, and I just want to be assured, anyway, that there are enough dollars in the fund to make those payments necessary for those people who have to turn to these dollars to survive.

SENATOR VRTISKA: I understand your concern, and certainly I think anybody in the workplace understands what you're saying and I would...I don't have the facts, it's just a general observation, but it appears that the cost of unemployment benefits have been increasing and will continue to increase. That's why the committee decided the proper thing to do was to put this money into a trust where it would alleviate some of the increased costs to the employer as we move down the road and have unemployment problems. Certainly they're not going to get any less until this economy turns around.

SENATOR JENSEN: Well, certainly, and if there were some numbers that could be supplied to the body, I think it would be helpful to all of us to have a little better understanding about what